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ABSTRACT

Key elements of selected educational choice programs in 11 states are summarized in this report. Information is provided on the type and level of program, number and age of students served, program costs and revenue sources, staffing, evaluation methods, and length of time in existence. Educational trends, barriers to program expansion, the relationship to national goals, and average annual state expenditure per pupil are also examined. Methodology involved a telephone survey of selected state programs, with a focus on those addressed by state policy. Three broad categories of programs were identified--interstate, interdistrict, and intradistrict. Within these broad categories, three additional descriptors were named: open enrollment, postsecondary enrollment, and alternative/magnet schools. Information is provided on 24 choice programs in the following 11 states--Arizona, Arkansas, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, South Dakota, Vermont, Washington, and West Virginia. Included are a state program matrix, an overview page for each state, and brief program descriptions. The final section describes four local choice programs in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Cupertino, California; San Jose, California; and Portland, Oregon. (LMI)

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THE Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

PROGRAM REPORT

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Key Elements of Selected Educational Choice Programs:

A Telephone Survey Summary

Final Report

by
Kathryn Oliver
Leslie Crohn
Rex Hagans

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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August, 1991

Table of Contents

Page

Introduction I

Executive Summary III

State Program Matrix VII

Arizona
- Overview 1
- Inter- and intra-district open enrollment (local district option) 3
- Post-secondary enrollment option 4

Arkansas
- Overview 5
- Cross-district open enrollment 6
- Home schooling 7

Iowa
- Overview 8
- Post-secondary enrollment options act 10
- Open enrollment 11
- Alternative schools 12
- Home schooling 13

Massachusetts
- Overview 14
- Intra-district school choice 16
- Metco program 17

Michigan
- Overview 19
- Mathematics/science challenge grants program 20

Minnesota
- Overview 21
- Post-secondary enrollment 23
- Open enrollment 23
- High school graduation incentives 24
- Diploma opportunities for adults 21 and over 26
- Education opportunities for pregnant minors and minor parents 26
- Outcome-based charter schools 27

Nebraska
- Overview 28
- Enrollment options program (cross-district) 29

South Dakota
Overview 30
Inter-state open enrollment contracting 31
Intra-state cross-district open enrollment 32

Vermont
Overview 33
Choice program for students in local districts which don't operate a school 35
Home schooling 36

Washington
Overview 37
Enrollment options 39

West Virginia
Overview 45
Inter-county open enrollment 46

Selected Local Programs 47

Milwaukee Choice Plan, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 48

Cupertino Union School District, Cupertino, California 52

San Jose Unified School District, San Jose, California 55

Metropolitan Learning Center, Portland, Oregon 59

INTRODUCTION

As it sought to assist and inform the work of the Alaska Governor's Commission on School Choice, the Alaska Department of Education found most resources addressed the concept and policy issues surrounding choice. A few resources, which described specific programs were also identified and located (such as the work of Joe Nathan).

However, the Department was unable to locate a current, crisp summary of relevant data about key elements across a number of programs in the evolving choice movement. The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) was therefore asked to survey selected programs, collect the best data available on a series of key questions, and prepare a data display for Commission members to review.

APPROACH

The Department, in consultation with the Commission, identified a number of key questions on which data were to be collected. These included the type and level of program, the number and age of students served, program costs and revenue sources, program staffing, ways in which the program evaluates its progress and success, and length of time the program has been in existence. NWREL was also asked to collect information concerning trends in enrollment, barriers to program expansion, and ways in which the program saw itself addressing national goals for education. Finally, NWREL was asked to include data on average annual state expenditure per pupil, as listed in the National Education Association's "Rankings of the States, 1990."

A telephone survey of selected programs was identified as the most practical and productive method for collecting important data within the established timeframe.

Programs for interview were selected by the Department, in consultation with NWREL. This initial pool included state, district, and individual school programs. While not a comprehensive list of all established choice programs, the list represented a sampling of choice programs currently in operation across the nation.

In designing the study, NWREL determined that a statewide approach would be useful and should be the major focus of data collection efforts. Although information was welcomed and solicited on both "legislatively mandated" and "available to students" programs, one primary criterion was the visibility of choice efforts within the state. Hence, the data tend to focus heavily (but not exclusively) on programs which are addressed by state policy and therefore define choice "within the system."

Within the statewide focus, NWREL's review of the literature led to the identification of three broad categories of programs offered by states:

INTER-STATE programs, which allow students to select schools across state lines.

INTER-DISTRICT (cross-district) programs, which permit students to transfer between districts.

INTRA-DISTRICT programs, which permit selection of schools within a given district.

Within these broad categories, three additional descriptors were identified as being used to depict the types of programs in operation:

OPEN ENROLLMENT, which indicates that students are free to select the school of their choice. Historically used in connection with intra-district approaches, it is increasingly being applied to inter-district approaches.

POST-SECONDARY ENROLLMENT, which indicates that high school students are permitted to attend colleges and universities prior to high school graduation.

ALTERNATIVE OR MAGNET SCHOOLS , which are generally local programs, but may be found at the state or regional levels; as presented here, these refer only to publicly-supported programs.

An interview protocol was developed based on the key questions, selected programs, categories of options, and program descriptors. Key contacts, primarily from state departments of education, were identified and asked to respond to the key questions as well as supply NWREL with any relevant materials such as assessment data, program brochures, etc. A copy of each program write-up was FAXed to the key contact upon completion for verification of accuracy.

The information presented in this paper provides the Department with: (1) a matrix of program types and states from which data were collected; (2) an overview page for each state which presents the answers to the key questions in summary form, along with the name, title, and phone number of the key contact; and (3) brief program descriptions of specific approaches within that state. States in this section include Arizona, Arkansas, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, South Dakota, Vermont, Washington, and West Virginia. Twenty-four choice programs are described in this section.

A separate section includes descriptions of four "local" choice programs: Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Cupertino, California; San Jose, California; and Portland, Oregon.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Interview Highlights

Among the 11 states, 6 offer inter-district open enrollment on a statewide (comprehensive) basis. In another 3 states, inter-district open enrollment is available in some districts but not in others. One state allows students the choice of attending school in a neighboring state as distances and road conditions limit accessibility to in-state schools (inter-state contracting). Still another state allows a student to enroll in schools, public and private, both inside and outside the state, if the student resides in a district that doesn't operate a school.

Overall, data on intra-district programs offered within states are not maintained at the state level. Massachusetts and Arizona are exceptions. Massachusetts has a controlled choice program involving 16 districts; Arizona has 74 districts which permit intra-district transfers. Respondents in other states indicated that many or most large urban districts within their states offer some type of intra-district choice. Each school district within these states would have to be contacted to determine specific policies.

In one state, regional schools have been established: Michigan features mathematics and science enrichment programs.

Alternative schools and programs were listed as options in five states. Iowa and Washington both maintain excellent information on their alternative programs. Minnesota has three new programs to extend educational opportunities: (1) a high school graduation incentives program; (2) diploma opportunities for adults 21 and over; and (3) education opportunities for pregnant minors and minor parents.

Arizona, Iowa, and Minnesota offer their students the option to take college courses while in high school (post-secondary enrollment options).

Program Levels

Open enrollment programs for both inter-district and intra-district transfers are generally offered to students from kindergarten through grade 12. Post-secondary options are primarily available to 11th and 12th graders. Alternative and specialty programs offered statewide are primarily geared to secondary students; magnet schools in local districts are most often found at the elementary level.

Staffing

To date, there has been minimal impact on staffing in states offering inter-district choice plans. One school has been closed in Iowa due to students transferring out of district; however other factors were also involved in the closing of that school. In states with post-secondary enrollment options, there is a potential impact on advanced-level courses currently offered in smaller to mid-sized schools.

Number of Pupils Served/Length of Time Operated

Compared to overall state enrollments, participation in statewide inter-district open enrollment programs is currently very limited. A contributing factor may be that most of the programs began within the last two years, and one is still being phased in.

State	Inter-district Program Enrollment	Overall State Enrollment	Date Begun
Arizona	9,833	617,519	1989*
Arkansas	630	435,000	1990
Iowa	1,647	473,860	1989
Minnesota	5,940	730,672	1987
Nebraska	567	260,000	1990**

The controlled choice intra-district program in Massachusetts, in contrast, involves 205,000 of the state's 825,775 students.

Enrollment in other types of programs varies widely as many of the programs target certain student populations (e.g., gifted, dropouts, pregnant minors, vocational/technical, etc.).

* 1989 is the date Arizona first surveyed districts regarding inter-district transfers. The state of Arizona has not yet enacted specific legislation requiring school choice.

** 1990 was the first year in Nebraska's four-year phase-in program.

Revenue Sources/Program Costs

Inter-district programs generally are not considered to have separate costs from general educational programs. Thus, their revenue sources tend to be the same as general educational programs within that state. Each state has different funding formulas.

Costs per pupil for alternative programs vary widely from state to state and, within each state, also vary from overall state expenditures per pupil. For example, in Iowa, alternative program costs are 1.3 times the secondary per pupil expenditure. Minnesota's adult programs cost about 65 percent of that state's cost per pupil at the secondary level.

Alternative and specialty funding sources are equally diverse. Michigan's regional math/science challenge grants are only 25 percent state funded; 75 percent of the funding for these programs comes from local sources such as corporations, grants, and contributions from school districts. Iowa's alternative programs are funded by a combination of state aid and local property taxes, which vary from district to district.

Measurements of Success

This was perhaps one of the most difficult questions to answer for states with newly-implemented inter-district programs. These programs simply have not been in existence long enough for such assessment. Legislation often does not require districts to file reports with either the legislature or the state department of education. In addition, funding allocations for evaluation of legislatively-mandated programs range from zero to minimal. (Iowa is an exception, and Washington will require reporting beginning in 1992.) Most of the respondents agreed, however, that one simple measurement of success would be the number of participants in the programs as they progress. Minnesota reports maintaining a 90 percent graduation rate.

In Massachusetts, data on the Metco program are collected but not compiled. The state board of education approved funding for program evaluation; however, the necessary dollars were not appropriated by the legislature. In the intra-district programs in Massachusetts, standard academic indicators, review of applications, and parent surveys are collected and analyzed each year.

In the post-secondary enrollment options program, again, most respondents agreed that the number of participants would be a fair measurement of success. Iowa, however, also tracked the number of credits attempted and passed.

Most alternative or specialty programs have unique evaluation measures. For example, Washington submits reports on its alternative schools to the legislature every other year, and to the state board of education on alternate years. A staff survey is currently being conducted.

Growth Trends/Barriers to Expansion

Growth trends for inter-district open enrollment plans will not be apparent for several years. Intra-district plans (with the exception of Massachusetts) are not assessed by state agencies. In Massachusetts, the Metco program has 3,400 participants with a waiting list of 4,000 families, and the intra-district school choice plan reports an upward trend. Barriers to expansion remain unknown for inter-district plans.

Respondents for post-secondary enrollment options noted that tuition may limit the expansion of these programs as, in most cases, students bear the costs.

Alternative or specialty programs either reported no comparative data or reported definite growth trends. Barriers to expansion in these areas -- indeed, in all programs reviewed -- most often focused on funding constraints.

The issue of transportation costs was brought up often, both in this area and in response to questions about program limitations/restrictions. Approaches to transportation problems vary widely, but were viewed as a key concern by all respondents. Currently, in states with inter-district open enrollment plans, most resident and receiving districts formulate their own agreements on transportation. Minnesota offers transportation to participants in its program for minor parents from their homes to their day care centers, then to their own schools, back to day care, and home again.

Linkage to National Goals

Most respondents felt that their programs met or exceeded several of the goals. In most cases, however, this was a very informal assessment. No direct linkage has been made by any program. Very obvious correlations were found in alternative programs, where all goals but the school readiness goal are generally addressed.

STATE PROGRAM MATRIX

	Inter-District Open Enrollment		Intra-District Open Enrollment		Inter-State Contracting	In-State Regional Programs	Alternative Schools	Post-Secondary Enrollment Options
	Limited[3]	Comprehensive	Limited	Comprehensive				
Arizona	X		X					X
Arkansas[1]		X						
Iowa		X					X	X
Massachusetts	X		X					
Michigan		legislation pending		legislation pending		X (math/science)	X	
Minnesota[2]		X					X	X
Nebraska		X						
South Dakota	X							
Vermont					X			
Washington		X					X	
West Virginia		X						

1 Home schooling is monitored by the state department of education.
2 Charter schools are being established beginning 1991-92.
3 Includes only states in which data are collected.

I. SELECTED STATE PROGRAMS

STATE OVERVIEW:

Arizona

Statewide Public School Enrollment: 617,519 students in 209 school districts

Program Options:

(1) Inter- and intra-district open enrollment (local district option)
(2) Post-secondary enrollment option

Grade Levels:

Inter- and intra-district open enrollment: K-12
Post-secondary enrollment option: 9-12

Date Begun:

Inter- and intra-district open enrollment:
Varies from district to district.

Post-secondary enrollment option: 1989-90

Primary Program Revenue Source(s):

Inter- and intra-district open enrollment:
Varies from district to district.

Post-secondary enrollment option:
Community colleges (same as regular educational revenue sources, as follows):

Local funds	46%
State aid	20%
Cash balances	13%
Tuition/fees	12%
Other	9%

State universities: State appropriations and student fees (same as for regular enrollees)

Secondary Revenue Source(s): N/A

Average Annual State Expenditure/Pupil:

Overall: $3,632

Average Annual Program Cost/Pupil:

Inter- and intra-district open enrollment:
Varies from district to district.

Post-secondary enrollment option:
Cost is included in higher education funding.

Contacts:

Inter- and intra-district open enrollment
Ed Sloat
Deputy Associate Supt. for Research & Development
(602) 542-5031

Post-secondary enrollment option
Karen Spahn
Manager of Planning Information Systems
Board of Regents
(602) 255-4082

Sharon Wheeler
Associate Director, Research
State Board of Directors for Community Colleges
(602) 255-4037

Linkage to National Goals:

Inter- and intra-district open enrollment:
Not definable.

Post-secondary enrollment option:
Direct tie-in to goals two through five, especially goal two. Students may use university credits to apply to high school graduation credits.

1. Inter- and intra-district open enrollment (elementary & secondary)

Description:

Students may attend schools other than their schools of residence by individual request to local school boards. There is no statewide "program" or "plan" covering such requests.

Purpose:

To allow parents/students more educational choices.

Admission Procedures:

Varied, as each district sets its own policies. One hundred twenty-two districts have a formal policy for admitting non-resident students.

Limitations/Restrictions:

- o Parent initiative is a key factor, as there is no publicity regarding these options.
- o 162 of 177 districts surveyed (see note in "Growth Trend") permit attendance of non-resident students.
- o 152 districts permit students to attend schools outside their districts.
- o 74 districts with more than one school allow intra-district transfers.
- o Only 38 districts provide any form of transportation to non-resident students.
- o In general, most districts accept or deny transfer requests based on space available, special education facilities, and federal desegregation plans.

No. of Participants:

9,833 students

Growth Trend:

Unknown. The first "Non-Resident Student Enrollment Survey" was conducted by the state department of education in November 1989. Statistics cited in this section are taken from that survey.

Limitations to Program Expansion:

Unknown, as this is not a statewide "program."

Student Characteristics:

Ethnicity of inter- and intra-district transfers:

White	65.52%
Black	4.02%
Hispanic	22.45%
American Indian	6.52%
Other	1.43%

Staffing:

Data not available.

Evaluation:

The survey did not address this area.

2. Post-secondary enrollment option

Description:

Any student in grades 9-12 may enroll in any Arizona institution of higher education. In addition, students of any age may be admitted to a community college if they meet certain requirements.

Purpose:

To provide high school students alternatives to courses of study offered within their schools/districts.

Admission Procedures:

Students apply directly to state universities or community colleges. Both the community colleges and the universities send high schools a copy of their admission rules annually.

Limitations/Restrictions:

Students must have a composite SAT score of 930 or composite ACT score of 22.

Students may be limited to six hours a semester.

Students are not necessarily allowed into degree programs; registration is done on a course by course, semester by semester basis. All course prerequisites must be met.

No. of Participants:

Community colleges:

5,767 students under 18. This figure includes all persons under 18 -- both students currently enrolled in high school and those not enrolled in high school (e.g., those who have no high school diploma or GED). Some overlapping of students may also be present in these figures, as students may register at more than one community college.

State universities:

280 students under 18 in three state universities.

Growth Trend:

N/A

Limitations to Program Expansion:

Concerns over student maturity level, hesitancy in advising in rural districts, tuition costs.

Student Characteristics:

N/A

Staffing:

N/A

Evaluation:

N/A. However, the community colleges consider the number of students enrolled a measurement factor.

STATE OVERVIEW:

Arkansas

Statewide Public School Enrollment: 435,000 students in 324 districts

Program Options:
1. Cross-district open enrollment
2. Home schooling

Grade Levels: K-12

Date Begun:
1. Cross-district: 1990-91 school year
2. Home schooling: N/A

Primary Program Revenue Source(s):
No special funding except for transportation costs for the cross-district open enrollment program.

Secondary Revenue Source(s): N/A

Average Annual State Expenditure/Pupil:
Overall $3,134

Average Annual Program Cost/Pupil:
1. Cross-district: same as above
2. Home schooling: N/A

Contact:
Paul Luehr
Educational Assistant to the Director
(501) 682-4206

Linkage to National Goals:
Accountability is addressed. In addition, specific legislation entitled "Meeting the National Education Goals: Schools for Arkansas' Future" has been passed. The code includes sections on: definitions of learner outcomes; linking curriculum, assessment, and professional preparation to learner outcomes; teacher licensure standards; support for the restructuring schools process; establishment of the Academy for Leadership Training and School Board Management; reorienting the general education division of the state department of education to support restructuring; development of a long-term plan for restructuring Arkansas' education system; and appointment of an advisory committee.

1. Cross-district open enrollment

Description:
Permits students to move to any other school in the state.

Purpose:
To enhance school improvement through competitiveness.

Admission Procedures:
For 1990-91, parents contacted the receiving district by February 1. For 1991-92 and beyond, April 17 became the application date. Districts notify parents of decision within 60 days of receipt of application.

Limitations/Restrictions:

- Each school district decides whether to participate or not.
- Participating districts must adopt specific standards for acceptance and rejection.
- Beginning 1991-92, participating districts must advertise their participation.
- In general, students bear transportation costs. Resident districts may agree to transport to receiving district boundary, and receiving district may agree to provide transportation within the receiving district. Both districts may count such costs in their calculations for transportation funding.
- Athletes cannot participate interscholastically during their first year in the receiving school district.
- Students cannot transfer to a non-resident district which has a higher percentage of students of the applicant's race than the student's resident district, with certain exemptions. (If any transfer would result in a conflict with a desegregation court order or a district's court-approved desegregation plan, the terms of the order or plan govern.)

No. of Participants:
630 students

Growth Trend:
Unknown; program still being phased in.

Limitations to Program Expansion:
Unknown; program still being phased in.

Student Characteristics:
Race, gender, and other pertinent information will be reported annually beginning 1991-92.

Staffing:
Staff in 126 school districts participated.

Evaluation:
Data not yet available as cross-district programs are currently being phased in. Plans are to measure overall success by number of participants, and a school's effectiveness by the number of students it loses/gains.

2. Home schooling

Parents apply through the state department of education. Students must pass certain tests at certain grade levels. Student progress is monitored by the state department of education.

STATE OVERVIEW:

Iowa

Statewide Public School Enrollment: 473,860 students in 430 school districts

Program Options:

1. Post-secondary enrollment options act
2. Open enrollment
3. Alternative scool
4. Home schooling

Grade Levels:

1. Post-secondary: 11-12
2. Open enrollment: K-12
3. Alternative schools: 7-12
4. Home Schooling K-12

Date Begun:

1. Post-secondary: 1987
2. Open enrollment: 1989
3. Alternative schools: During the 1970s
4. Home schooling: Has always been available with licensed teachers; law changed last legislature session.

Primary Program Revenue Source(s):

1. Post-secondary: Local districts
2. Open enrollment: Combination of state aid and local property taxes; varies from district to district.
3. Alternative schools: Same as open enrollment
4. Home schooling: Home schoolers can also enroll at local schools (dual enrollment). The student is then included in the public school's basic enrollment and is counted as one pupil.

Secondary Revenue Source(s): N/A

Average Annual State Expenditure/Pupil:

Overall $4,362

Average Annual Program Cost/Pupil:

Post-secondary: N/A. The maximum a college can charge a district per course (including tuition, books, fees) is $250.
Open enrollment: Same as state average (see above)
Alternative schools: 1.3 times the state figure (see above)
Home schooling: N/A

Contacts:

Post-secondary
Ed Ranney
Consultant, Department of Education
(515) 281-3893

Open enrollment, home schooling
Don Helvick
Consultant, Bureau of School Administration
and Accreditation
(515) 281-5001

Alternative schools
Raymond Morley
Consultant, Department of Education
(515) 281-3786

Linkage to National Goals:

Post-secondary
Addresses goals two, three, and four.

Open enrollment
Program goals overlap the national goals. Choice of enrollment drives a good school system, provoking excellence in schools, thus providing places where the goals can be met.

Alternative schools
Goals two through six are addressed. Beyond the national goals, alternative schools stress student leadership and the personal/social development of students.

Home schooling: Home schooling has been available in Iowa for years, well before national goals were established.

1. Post-secondary enrollment options act

Description:

Permits currently enrolled 11th and 12th grade students to attend any accredited public institution of higher education in Iowa. Credits may be used either for high school graduation or college credit.

Purpose:

To provide high school students challenging alternatives to courses of study offered within their schools/districts. It may allow students to graduate early or to get a head start on college work while still in high school.

Admission Procedures:

Local districts are mandated to notify currently enrolled 9th, 10th, and 11th graders of their opportunity to participate in this program. A "Notice of Student Registration" form is signed by the student (and the parent if the student is under 18); the school district; and the post-secondary institution. Students are encouraged to apply by March 15.

Limitations/Restrictions:

- Post-secondary institutions may restrict the number of courses a student takes. Students may not take the number of hours which would define them as full-time students.

- Post-secondary courses which are comparable to high school level courses cannot be counted for high school graduation credit. Post-secondary courses which are at a higher level than high school courses must be accepted for high school credit at the student's request.

No. of Participants:

Data for 1990-91 are still being collected.

731 students enrolled in 575 community colleges, 116 private four-year colleges, 38 regents' institutions, and two private two-year colleges during 1989-90.

Growth Trend:

Comparative data not yet available.

Limitations to Program Expansion:

Funding constraints by local school districts via the state foundation aid plan (e.g. so much money per student).

Student Characteristics:

N/A

Staffing:

Impact on high school staffing is minimal at this point. There is a potential impact on advanced-level courses currently offered in smaller- to mid-sized schools.

Evaluation:

Students received 3,063 of 3,093 credits attempted during 1989-90.

2. Open enrollment

Description:

Allows parents to enroll their children in any public school in Iowa.

Purpose:

To permit parental choice in education.

Admission Procedures:

Parents file requests with their resident districts by October 30 for the following school year. During the first year only (1989-90), districts were required to put notification in local papers, so word of mouth is the primary source of information to parents at this time.

Limitations/Restrictions:

- o During 1989-90, districts could limit transfers out to five percent of their enrollment. During 1990-91, that figure rose to ten percent. From 1991-92 on, districts may not limit the number of transfers out.
- o During 1989-90, schools operating under a desegregation plan could elect not to participate.
- o If an applicant is a special education student, the resident district must contact the receiving district to ensure that an appropriate program is available.
- o Students who have been suspended or expelled must be reinstated before applying for open enrollment.
- o Transfers cannot adversely impact any school's desegregation plan.
- o 10th, 11th, and 12th graders lose one year of interscholastic eligibility.
- o Parents are primarily responsible for transportation. If families (1) qualify under low-income guidelines; and (2) are transferring to a contiguous district, students will receive either transportation on a bus route to the receiving district's bus route or a transportation reimbursement.
- o Districts are further required to define their own restrictions (class size is the most common).

No. of Participants:

1,674 applicants participated during 1990-91.

Growth Trend:

N/A

Limitations to Program Expansion:

Based on local school board decisions; relates to funding base.

Student Characteristics:

Socioeconomic data are not gathered. Ethnicity will be monitored beginning in 1991-92.

Staffing:

There has been minimal impact on school staffing thus far. One school has been closed, but having students transferring out was not the sole reason for its closure. There are two part-time staff members at the state department of education.

Evaluation:

Success is being measured by the number of participants. Such reporting is legislatively mandated and funded.

3. Alternative schools

Description:

Curriculum-based, structured, or student-need based instruction for students ranging from the very talented to the high school dropout.

Purpose:

To ensure that every young person find a place where academic achievement, personal/social development, and career/vocational development is encouraged and enhanced.

Admission Procedures:

Varied. All programs send out parent communication newsletters to families in their area. Enrollment is ongoing.

Limitations/Restrictions:

- Applications may be denied because of program size limitations.
- Some programs cannot accommodate middle school students.
- All programs are monitored for ethnic balance.
- Drugs, fighting, and aggressive behavior are not allowed.
- Students may participate through age 21. Persons over 21 may participate at the option of the local program/school.

No. of Participants:

5,000 students

Growth Trend:

The number of programs, schools, and participants is increasing.

Limitations to Program Expansion:

Not known.

Student Characteristics:

Most alternative school students are from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Student population data are detailed in two reports, listed below.

Staffing:

There are 104 dropout prevention and continuing education programs, including 27 separate schools. When needed, teachers are granted waivers to enable them to teach more subjects than the subject area(s) of their certification.

Evaluation:

At the end of each year, students are evaluated on their academic achievement, personal/social development, and career/vocational development. In addition, two major studies have recently been published:

"Making a Difference: A Report on Program Implementation and Student Outcomes for Dropout and Dropout Prevention Programs, 1989-90 School Year" (December, 1990)

"The Costs of Dropping Out of School and The Productivity Benefits of Returning and Graduating: A Survey of Iowa's Alternative School Graduates" (November 1990)

4. Home schooling

Description:
Law allows students to be schooled at home or in other environments outside the public schools.

Purposes:
To allow parents the option of schooling their children at home.

Admission Procedures:
Parents fill out forms at their local schools.

Limitations/Restrictions:

- Law changed at last legislative session to allow parents to teach their children at home without a teaching credential.
- Parents must report their children's progress to their local district.
- If children schooled outside the home must be taught by a licensed teacher.
- Home schooled children can also enroll at their local schools for some classes and activities.

No. of participants:
N/A

Growth Trend:
Too early to tell as the law was just changed during the last legislative session to allow parents without a teaching certificate to school their children at home.

Limitations to Program Expansion:
None.

Student Characteristics:
N/A

Staffing:
N/A

Evaluation:
N/A

STATE OVERVIEW:

Massachusetts

Statewide Public School Enrollment: 825,775 students in 361 school districts

Program Options:

1. Intra-district school choice
2. Metco program
3. Inter-district school choice

Grade Levels: K-12

Date Begun:

Intra-district magnet schools:	1967
Intra-district "universal choice":	1980
Metco:	1969
Inter-district:	1991

Primary Program Revenue Source(s):

Intra-district: percentage of state funding and local tax dollars varies
Metco: state funding
Inter-district: to be funded by deduction from state aid to sending districts

Secondary Revenue Source(s): School systems are reimbursed for specific documented incremental costs.

Average Annual State Expenditure/Pupil:

Overall $5,591

Average Annual Program Cost/Pupil:

Intra-district: varies
Metco: varies by community

Contacts:

Intra-district and inter-district
Charles Glenn
Director, Office of Equity
(617) 522-7805

Metco
Larry Witty
Educational Specialist
(617) 770-7271

Linkage to National Goals:

Intra-district
Massachusetts' experience with intra-district choice was a key element in the development of the national goals for education.

Metco
The program has a high percentage of student completion (goal two). On average, 70 percent or more of those completing the program go on to higher education (goals two-five).

Choice Programs in Massachusetts

1. Intra-district school choice ("controlled choice")

Description:

Within 10 participating districts, students/parents must select the school of their choice ("universal choice"). Attendance areas have been eliminated.

Within 6 participating districts, students/parents may select a magnet school or may stay in their attendance area. The districts encourage choice.

Purpose:

To foster school improvement and racial integration through choice.

Admission Procedures:

During March, students/parents apply in ranked order of preference through parent information centers in their districts; assignments are announced in April. Waiting lists are made for those who did not receive their first choice. From June on, late applicants and new residents are counseled at the parent information centers on an ongoing basis. Parents/students select schools from those still available, and are given their assignments at that time.

Limitations/Restrictions:

- o Participating districts must still maintain their desegregation mandates/plans.
- o Students with older siblings in the school of choice are given priority.
- o Students in a "walk zone" -- not needing bus transportation to their school of choice -- are also given priority.
- o After priorities are met, assignment is by random number.

No. of Participants:

145,000 students in 10 "universal choice" districts
60,000 students in 6 additional districts
205,000 total students in 16 districts

Over time, about 30-35 percent of the students have chosen a school other than what would have been the school in their attendance area; that figure is above 50 percent in Boston.

Seventy-four percent of incoming sixth-graders were assigned to their first-choice schools, and another 10 percent to their second choices in 1990-91. Only 15 percent of first graders and 9 percent of ninth graders were assigned to unrequested schools.

Growth Trend:

Upward. No district has ever left the program, and more students and districts continue to participate.

Limitations to Program Expansion:

Local governmental structure doesn't allow for growth on the "supply side" by creating new options outside the present structure.

Student Characteristics:

One quarter of all students, two-thirds of low-income students, and 80 percent of Black/Hispanic students in Massachusetts are involved.

Staffing:

Because of the enrollment process, school systems are able to assign staff more efficiently, keeping student/teacher ratios more balanced throughout the schools in their districts. Staffing changes do occur when a school is "over-enrolled" or "under-enrolled" due to placement requests.

Evaluation:

(a) Standard academic indicators are used.

(b) Applications are carefully analyzed to see what schools parents are choosing. The program is successful because many schools, not just a few, have become "schools of choice." The number of relatively popular schools doubled during 1990-91.

(c) Parent surveys are conducted in all districts each year.

Additional Funding Notes:

State funding for extra costs associated with magnet schools began in 1974. Currently, approximately $13.5 million a year is allocated in this way. Ninety percent of the cost of magnet school facilities is also funded by the state.

Costs per pupil for this program vary widely. As the choice programs are located in cities, the costs are higher than if they were located in rural areas.

Incremental costs associated with the intra-district choice programs are as follows:

(a) Program development -- $30,000 a year for an elementary school is typical.

(b) Parent information centers/counseling and assignment process -- averages approximately $20/student.

(c) Transportation -- varies. Some "targeting" of schools is done in the enrollment process; if parents select certain schools, transportation is provided.

2. Metco program

Description:

Permits minority students in Boston and Springfield to attend schools in neighboring suburbs.

Purpose:

Funds are provided by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for the transfer of minority students from urban school districts (Boston and Springfield) to suburban school districts for the purpose of reducing or eliminating racial imbalance. The addition of minority students helps to reduce racial isolation in the suburban school districts.

Admission Procedures:

Boston: Family applies to nonprofit agency (Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity).

Springfield: Family applies through the Springfield Public School system.

Limitations/Restrictions:

Constraints in funding limit the number of students who may be enrolled in the programs.

No. of Participants:

3,400 students (3,200 in Boston; 200 in Springfield)

Growth Trend:

Waiting list of 4,000 families in Boston.

Limitations to Program Expansion:

Funding constraints.

Student Characteristics:

Program is open to minority students who apply. Program enrollment does not reflect the minority student population in two sending school systems. For example, in Boston, the minority population is 45 percent African-American, 25 percent Hispanic, and 9 percent Asian. In contrast, 90-95 percent of those in the program are African-American, and 5-10 percent are Hispanic/Asian. Thus, there is currently a disproportionate number of African-American students in the program. A major program goal is for Metco enrollment to be more reflective of minority student population in the sending school districts.

Staffing:

School systems may hire academic support staff to provide adequate program staffing. The Metco program also has a coordinator in each school system.

Evaluation:

Much data has been collected, but not compiled. The state board of education has approved funding for a consultant to do program evaluation, but the legislature did not appropriate funding. Plans are developed to meet with each school staff to help them develop self-evaluation forms. Achievement scores, grades, placement in honors courses, etc., are all used to determine how academic support services will be allocated.

STATE OVERVIEW:

Michigan

Statewide Public School Enrollment: 1,577,039 students in 562 districts

Program Option: Mathematics/Science Grants Program

Grade Levels: 9-12 (accelerated program)
K-12 (outreach program)

Date Begun: 1988-89

Primary Program Revenue Source(s):

Local: 75% (includes private and corporate funds, NSF grants, contributions from local school districts)

State: 25%

Secondary Revenue Source(s): N/A

Average Annual State Expenditure/Pupil:

Overall: N/A

Average Annual Program Cost/Pupil: N/A

Contact:

Sue Dalbec
Mathematics/Science Challenge Grants Coordinator
(517) 373-1236

Linkage to National Goals: Goals three and four are directly addressed by these programs.

1. Mathematics/science challenge grants program

Description:

Regional mathematics and science centers established throughout the state by the following grants: (a) planning--to create a center's five-year plan; (b) start-up and development--to develop a center's accelerated program; (c) continuing suppport--to support a center's accelerated program; and (d) outreach--to extend the impact of the center and to coordinate K-12 curriculum reform.

Purposes:

(1) To provide secondary students accelerated mathematics and science programs not readily available in the local schools through: (a) regional schools which provide half-day instruction on a daily basis; (b) tie-ins to interactive video service; and (c) intensive short-term workshop settings.

(2) To serve as a clearinghouse of resources for secondary and elementary schools.

(3) To coordinate teacher training, curriculum development, and the enrichment of students in secondary and elementary schools.

Admission Procedures for Accelerated Program:

Each regional school has its own admission criteria which generally include test scores, grades, GPAs, teacher recommendations, and student essays. Information about each school is sent from the schools to all local schools in that area.

Limitations/Restrictions for Accelerated Schools:

Spaces are allocated by each regional area to each district. Transportation must be provided by the parents. In some cases, however, students can obtain school transportation if their school is at the same location as a vocational education center and hours/bus routes coincide.

No. of Participants:

Accelerated schools:	487
Outreach programs:	89,924

Growth Trend:

Upward.

Limitations to Program Expansion:

Legislative funding.

Student Characteristics:

Through the grant program application process, school programs are encouraged to provide access to economically disadvantaged and minority students.

Staffing:

A. 38 staff are involved in the four secondary accelerated centers.

B. Teaching positions are generally filled by teachers within the region who take sabbatical leaves from their local schools.

C. Directors/principals may be hired from outside the region.

D. Through the outreach program, over 11,000 teachers received in-service training.

STATE OVERVIEW:

Minnesota

Statewide Public School Enrollment: 730,672 students in 431 districts

Program Options:

1. Post-secondary enrollment
2. Open enrollment
3. High school graduation incentives
4. Diploma opportunities for adults 21 and over
5. Education opportunities for pregnant minors and minor parents
6. Outcome-based charter schools

Grade Levels:

1.	Post-secondary:	11-12
2.	Open enrollment:	K-12
3.	HSGI:	7-12
4.	DO-A21:	Adults 21 and over
5.	EO-PM&M:	7-12
6.	Charter schools:	K-12

Date Begun:

1.	Post-secondary:	1985
2.	Open enrollment:	1987
3.	HSGI:	1987
4.	DO-A21:	1987
5.	EO-PM&MP:	1988
6.	Charter schools:	1991

Primary Program Revenue Source(s): General educational revenue, which follows the students

Secondary Revenue Source(s): Alternative learning centers may receive Human Services funds for day care centers, etc.

Average Annual State Expenditure/Pupil:

Overall	$4,842

Average Annual Program Cost/Pupil:

Elementary	$3,045
Secondary	$4,020
Adult	$2,613

Contact Person:

Peggy Hunter
Enrollment Options Coordinator
(612) 297-2241

Linkage to National Goals:

Goal 2 is addressed through Minnesota's alternative learning centers, alternative programs, adult diploma opportunities, and pregnant minor programs. All of the "second chance" programs meet goal 3. All of the programs fulfill goal 5.

1. Post-secondary enrollment

Description:
Permits students in 11th and 12th grades to attend colleges or universities either part- or full-time for high school credit. The higher education institution may be a technical or community college, a state college, or private college; the institution must, however, offer a two-year liberal arts program.

Purpose:
To provide high school students challenging alternatives to courses of study offered within their schools/districts.

Admission Procedures:
N/A

Limitations/Restrictions:
Transportation must be provided by the parents.

No. of Participants:
6,200

Growth Trend:
N/A

Limitations to Program Expansion:
N/A

Student Characteristics:
N/A

Staffing:
N/A

Evaluation:
Success is measured by the number of participants in the program.

2. Open enrollment

Description:
Permits students in kindergarten through grade 12 to attend schools outside of the district in which they live.

Purpose:
To allow students and parents choice in school selection.

Admission Procedures:
Families must apply by January 15 for the following fall. Once accepted, they do not need to re-apply each year. A new application is required if the student wishes to return to the resident district or transfer to a new receiving district. Both districts must approve a request for a transfer back to a resident district made during the school year.

Limitations/Restrictions:

- o No resident district can refuse a leaving student.

- o Receiving districts may refuse applications based on space available. In addition, receiving districts may "close" their districts by program, grade level, school, or the entire district. These districts must publicly announce such closures in the early fall for the following fall.

- o Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Duluth have desegregation guidelines which must be followed. Applications are accepted at any time of the year for transfers into and out of these districts. Applicants in these three districts must apply first to their resident district. That application is then forwarded to the non-resident receiving district for approval. Currently, Minneapolis is not allowing any Caucasians to transfer out or persons of color to transfer in, as the ethnic ratio is exactly on target.

- o Transportation to the border of the receiving district must be provided by the parents. Transportation costs are, however, reimbursed for those families who qualify for free and reduced price lunch. In addition, if parents can demonstrate hardship, they may apply to the non-resident district for transportation.

No. of Participants:
5,940 (one percent of eligible students)

Growth Trend:
N/A

Limitations to Program Expansion:
N/A

Student Characteristics:
The socioeconomic background of participants is a true bell curve which is representative of the total student population in Minnesota, which has a nine percent minority population.

Staffing:
Every school in Minnesota participates in this program. Each district has a contact person for parents and public information. The state enrollment options office has a staff of three, and maintains both an "800" hotline and a local hotline.

Evaluation:
There is no statewide achievement testing in Minnesota, and no statistics on the program are kept except for enrollment figures.

3. High school graduation incentives

Definition:
Permits students ages 12 through adult to complete high school through a variety of options:

1. Students may enter a non-resident district high school at any time during the school year.

2. Students may attend one of 32 Area Learning Centers (ALCs) in 50 sites. ALCs offer year-round programs with non-traditional times (day, evening, or both), instruction, and services. Individualized programs, including credit for work experience, are established. Students may take courses either at the ALC or at any junior or senior high school -- for example, a physical education course at a high school gym or a computer lab in the evening. Students also may take community-offered adult Basic Education courses which lead to a high school diploma. Gym credits may be taken through the YM/WCA. The ALCs are well-established at the high school level. Middle school programs are being developed. A few ALCs also work with elementary students. Transition services such as (a) additional skills/work experience to assist in moving from school to work; and (b) counseling on how to access Health and Human Services (geared especially for pregnant minors and minor parents) are also offered through the ALCs. Many ALCs have on-site day care centers.

3. Two types of alternative programs are also available. The first is offered through the public schools. These are often run by a district, but sometimes operate as a school within a school. Individualized learning plans are set up and non-traditional teaching methods are used. However, most of the 37 public school alternative programs operate on the traditional school year calendar during school hours. On-site day care is often offered. The second type of alternative program allows students to attend private, non-profit schools in a contractual arrangement with the student's district and the private school. Most are located in the Twin Cities area, with the majority in Minneapolis. These schools generally follow the school year/school day, but use non-traditional teaching methods. Students can sometimes get permission to do off-site independent study for a portion of the day. On-site day care is often available.

Purpose:

To provide at-risk students a variety of alternatives so they can complete school.

Admission Procedures:

N/A

Limitations/Restrictions:

Transportation is the responsibility of the students or their parents. Where appropriate, public school transportation is provided.

No. of Participants:

2,397 secondary students and 327 adults in non-resident high schools in 1990-91
7,972 secondary students and adults in ALCs in 1989-90 (1990-91 figures not available)
2,752 secondary students and 250 adults in public alternative programs in 1990-91
750 FTE secondary students in private alternative programs in 1990-91

Growth Trend:

The number of students and programs is multiplying.

Limitations to Program Expansion:

N/A

Student Characteristics:

There seems to be a high percentage of low-income students in this program.

Staffing:

N/A

Evaluation:

Dropout rates are improving, and more students are graduating. Minnesota's graduation rate of 90 percent has remained constant even with increased school population.

4. Diploma opportunities for adults 21 and over

Description:

Permits adults to return to school after dropping out. Students can attend traditional high schools; Area Learning Centers; or public alternative school programs. They can take adult Basic Education courses offered through community education, and can also use the post-secondary enrollment option.

Purpose:

To assist low-income adults (displaced workers, displaced homemakers, etc.) the opportunity to complete their high school education. Any dropout meeting the criteria listed below is eligible, whether the applicant has been out of school just a few days or for 10-20 years. Funding for up to two years toward a diploma is provided.

Admission Procedures:

N/A

Limitations/Restrictions:

Students must meet low-income/poverty level/displaced worker/displaced homemaker criteria.

No. of Participants:

N/A

Growth Trend:

N/A

Limitations to Program Expansion:

N/A

Student Characteristics:

Students are low-income; no other characteristics are known.

Staffing:

N/A

Evaluation:

Success is measured by the number of program participants and the number of high school graduates. More students are graduating from high school. Minnesota's graduation rate of 90 percent has remained constant even with increased school population.

5. Education opportunities for pregnant minors and minor parents

Description:

Permits pregnant minors and minor parents to complete high school through a variety of options. The options are the same as those listed under the high school graduation incentives program definition section. Publicly funded transportation is provided from participants' homes to day care centers to schools, back to day care centers, and home.

Purpose:

To provide pregnant minors and minor parents alternatives and support services to assist them in completing school.

Admission Procedures:

N/A

Limitations/Restrictions:

In order to receive AFDC funds, low-income young women MUST be currently enrolled in school.

No. of Participants:
Not separately counted.

Growth Trend:
N/A

Limitations to Program Expansion:
N/A

Student Characteristics:
Low-income pregnant minors and minor parents.

Staffing:
N/A

Evaluation:
Success is measured by the number of program participants and the number of pregnant minors and minor parents who complete high school.

6. Outcome-based charter schools

Description:
Permits teachers to form their own schools and school districts, under the sponsorship of current Minnesota public school districts. The schools will not be required to have the traditional school bureaucracy or curriculum. Eight charter schools will be established.

Purpose:
To provide more educational choices for parents and students.

Admission Procedures:
N/A; program is beginning fall 1991.

Limitations/Restrictions:
The charter schools must obtain the sponsorship of a public school district and approval of the State Board of Education, then operate under its sponsorship. When formed, the charter schools will be considered public schools.

No. of Participants:
N/A

Growth Trend:
Will not be known for several years. It is anticipated that one charter school will be operational this year.

Limitations to Program Expansion:
N/A

Student Characteristics:
N/A

Staffing:
N/A

Evaluation:
N/A

STATE OVERVIEW:

Nebraska

Statewide Public School Enrollment: 260,000 in 812 districts

Program Options: Enrollment Options Program (cross-district)

Grade Levels: K-12

Date Begun: 1990-91 school year

Primary Program Revenue Source(s): State funding

Secondary Revenue Source(s): Legislative allocations for transportation payments

Average Annual State Expenditure/Pupil:

Kindergarten	$1,882
Grades 1-6	$3,764
Grades 7-8	$4,517
Grades 9-12	$5,270

Average Annual Program Cost/Pupil:

Same as above

Contact:

Allan Warner
Director, Enrollment Options Program
(402) 471-2743

Linkage to National Goals:

There has been no particular effort to mesh program goals to national goals.

Choice Program in Nebraska

1. Enrollment options program (cross-district)

Description:

Permits students to move to any other school in the state.

Purpose:

To allow students to select the school that best meets their educational needs.

Admission Procedures:

Using forms developed by the state, parents file applications between September 1 and January 1 (for the following fall) to both the resident district and the receiving district. Both resident and receiving districts may waive the above deadlines. The applications are also reviewed by the state department of education for accuracy of resident status listed.

Limitations/Restrictions:

- For the 1990-91 school year, both resident and receiving school districts determined whether or not they would participate.
- For the 1991-92 school year, resident school districts must participate, allowing up to 5 percent of their students to transfer out of their districts. Receiving districts still may determine whether or not they will participate, but may place limitations based on space, program availability, and compliance with either federal or local desegregation plans.
- By the 1993-94 school year, all school districts will be required to participate. They may, however, still place limitations based on space, program availability, and compliance with either federal or local desegregation plans.
- Transportation is generally up to the parents unless the family qualifies for free/reduced lunch. In that case, some mileage may be reimbursed. Receiving districts have the option of offering transportation assistance.

No. of Participants:

567 students

Growth Trend:

Unknown; program still being phased in.

Limitations to Program Expansion:

Unknown; program still being phased in.

Student Characteristics:

Data not yet available; program still being phased in.

Staffing:

Staff in 126 school districts participated in 1990-91. There are two full-time staff members and one part-time consultant at the state department of education.

Evaluation:

There are no plans to formalize evaluation of the program. Success will be based on student participation.

STATE OVERVIEW:

South Dakota

Statewide Public School Enrollment: 128,635 students in 183 school districts (1990-91)
(178 school districts 1991-92)

Program Options:
1. Inter-state open enrollment contracting
2. Intra-state cross-district open enrollment

Grade Levels: K-12, but mostly secondary level for both programs

Date Begun: 1968

Primary Program Revenue Source(s): For both programs:
60.00% local property taxes
28.41% state funding
10.13% federal funding
01.46% county funding

Secondary Revenue Source(s): Capital outlay and bond redemption

Average Annual State Expenditure/Pupil:

Overall	$3,272
Secondary	$4,040
Elementary	$2,800

Average Annual Program Cost/Pupil:
Same as above, for both programs

Contact Person:
Hank Kosters
Director of School Operations
Department of Education & Cultural Affairs
(605) 773-3243

Linkage to National Goals: New cross-district tuition waiver is a key ingredient.

"Modernization of Education" legislation has appropriated funding for K-12 programs.

A National Science Foundation grant totaling $7.5 million over five years has been awarded to restructure science and math K-16.

1. Inter-state open-enrollment contracting

Description:

Permits students in districts with no high schools to attend accredited high schools in neighboring states. Current reciprocity agreements are with Montana and North Dakota. The "home" district pays tuition to the receiving district (up to $4,240 in 1991-92 for secondary).

If the home district does not have an elementary school, elementary students may also attend accredited out-of-state schools; both tuition (up to $3,003 in 1991-92) and transportation costs are paid to the receiving district.

Purpose:

To provide accessible education to all students.

Admission Procedures:

Generally students apply to receiving districts.

Limitations/Restrictions:

See notes in "definition" section.

No. of Participants:

400

Growth Trend:

While the state's overall population is stable (basically the same as 10-20 years ago), rural population and rural school enrollment is declining. During each of the last three years, five schools have closed.

Limitations to Program Expansion:

See statement above.

Student Characteristics:

N/A

Staffing:

N/A

Evaluation:

No formal data. Programs are felt to be a "plus" in keeping students in school. Inter-state programs are less successful with the state's Indian population.

2. Intra-state cross-district open enrollment contracting

Description:

a. Permits students in districts with no high schools to attend high school in another district within the state. Participating districts may agree to waive tuition.

b. Permits students in rural areas where (1) there are no bus systems; and (2) students live more than ten miles from their resident high school to attend any public high school in the state. Tuition follows the student.

c. Permits students on Indian reservations to attend (1) any Bureau of Indian Affairs School; or (2) any public high school in the state.

d. Permits K-12 students residing in districts other than their parents' or guardians' districts to attend school in the district where the student resides.

e. Students K-12 whose attendance may be affected by geographical barriers may attend school in districts outside of theirs. If denied by local board, request may be appealed to State Secretary of Education or the courts.

Purpose:
To provide accessible education to all students.

Admission Procedures:
Students generally apply to receiving districts.

Limitations/Restrictions:
See notes in "definition" section.

No. of Participants for a, b, c(2), e:	103
No. of Participants for c(1):	4,929
No. of Participants for d:	350

Growth Trend:
While the state's overall population is stable (basically the same as 10-20 years ago), rural population and rural school enrollment is declining. During each of the last three years, five schools have closed.

Limitations to Program Expansion:
See statement above.

Student Characteristics:
N/A

Staffing:
N/A

Evaluation:
No formal data. Programs are felt to be a "plus" in keeping students in school.

STATE OVERVIEW:

Vermont

Statewide Public School Enrollment: 100,000 students in 60 supervisory districts (279 town school districts).

Program Options:

1. Choice program for students in local districts which don't operate a school (e.g., some towns in Vermont operate elementary schools, but not middle or high schools). Towns not operating schools:
   Grades K-6: 11 towns
   Grades 7-8: 51 towns
   Grades 9-12: 94 towns

2. Home schooling

Grade Levels:

1. K-12
2. K-12

Date Begun:

1. N/A
2. N/A

Primary Program Revenue Source(s):

1. State and local funds
2. N/A

Secondary Revenue Source(s):

1. Tuition in some cases
2. None

Average Annual State Expenditure/ Pupil: Approximately $3,496 (1990 excluding special education, etc.) This includes state and local funds.

Average Annual Program Cost/Pupil:

1. N/A
2. N/A

Contact Person:

Chris Kapesalis
Special Consultant to the Commissioner
(on loan from IBM)
(802) 828-3135

Linkage to National Goals:

Both programs in Vermont predate the national goals.

Choice Programs in Vermont

1. Choice program for students in local districts which don't operate a school:

Description:

All towns in Vermont have local school boards whether there are schools or not. In one supervisory district of five towns there are seven school boards (one for the elementary school, one for each of the five towns which combine to form a union school district, and one for the union high school). Some towns run their own elementary school, but not a middle or high school. Therefore, students are "tuitioned out" to other schools, public or private.

Purpose:

To allow students to attend schools outside their local districts if those districts don't operate schools.

Admission Procedures:

Parents can choose a high school for their child, or one can be designated. This choice also includes private schools, such as St. Johnsberry, which also operates a vocational education center on a contracted basis. Approximately two-thirds of the students at St. Johnsberry are public school students. Parents can also elect to send their child to an out-of-state school; the state and local funds follow the child.

Limitations/Restrictions:

None.

No. of Participants:

Approximately 20 percent of Vermont students are eligible.

Growth Trend:

Upward.

Limitations to Program Expansion:

N/A

Student Characteristics:

N/A

Staffing:

N/A

Evaluation:

One study on St. Johnsberry Academy found that public school tuitioned students performed better at their institution than the regular private 9-12 schools in the region. The Vermont Business Roundtable is also doing a study of educational choice in the state but has not yet completed the report.

2. Home schooling

Vermont also allows parents to school their children at home. Approximately 700 students are currently being taught by their parents. The number of parents choosing this option is growing.

STATE OVERVIEW:

Washington

Statewide Public School Enrollment: 807,682 students in 296 districts

Program Options:

Enrollment options:

a. Inter- and intra-district transfers
b. High school credits for 7th and 8th grade students
c. "Running Start" (pilot program for post-secondary enrollment)
d. Home schooling
e. Private schools
f. Educational clinics
g. Transition school
h. Alternative education programs

Grade Levels: Varies by program

Date Begun: Varies by program

Primary Program Revenue Source(s): Approximately 80 percent of education costs are covered by the state; local districts raise the remaining 20 percent

Secondary Revenue Source(s): Local levies

Average Annual State Expenditure/Pupil:

Overall $4,348

Average Annual Program Cost/Pupil: Varies by program

Contact Persons:

Inter- and intra-district transfers, high school credits, "Running Start":
Marcia Costello
Legislative Center, Department of Education
(206) 586-6906

Home schooling, educational clinics, private schools:
Barbara Mertens
Director, Student Support Services
(206) 753-2562

Alternative programs:
Marilee Jensen (for John Anderson)
Program Secretary, Alternative Education
(206) 586-4512

Linkage to National Goals:

Washington's legislation pre-dated the national goals for education.

Choice Programs in Washington

1. Enrollment options:

a. Inter- and intra-district transfers

Description:
Permits K-12 students to attend school outside of their attendance area either within their school district or in another district. Current legislation is an expansion of existing statutes.

Purpose:
To provide parents and students more educational choices.

Admission Procedures:
Varied, as each district sets its own policies. The state department of education has an information booklet which is publicly distributed. In addition, school districts are required to provide notice of their enrollment options annually.

Limitations/Restrictions:

- By June 30, 1990, school districts must have adopted policies regarding both inter- and intra-district transfers. Those policies went into effect during the 1990-91 school year.
- The resident district must allow students to transfer out if the transfer will provide educational gain, or if the receiving district is closer in proximity to the parent's day care facility or place of work. If a desegregation plan is in place, that plan supersedes the above.
- The receiving district must have an equitable policy regarding transfers, but they may deny requests based on space available. They may also charge a transfer fee: the difference between the levy amounts of the two districts.

No. of Participants:
N/A

Growth Trend:
N/A

Limitations to Program Expansion:
N/A

Student Characteristics:
Data have been compiled from a choice enrollment survey; a report is available from Tom Case (503-753-6708).

Staffing:
N/A

Evaluation:

No reports on these options are currently required; however SPI has compiled preliminary data. In December, 1992, districts will be required to report the following to the legislature: (1) the number of and reasons for transfers; (2) the number of and reasons for denials; and (3) the impact on the district's educational program.

b. High school credit for junior high students

Description:

Permits 7th and 8th grade students to take high school level courses for high school credit.

Purpose:

To allow students to take advanced level courses during junior high, and to have those courses be counted for high school graduation credit.

Admission Procedures:

Parents must request approval for such coursework from their child's school.

Limitations/Restrictions:

Courses taken must be equivalent to high school courses even if offered at the junior high school level. They also may be taken with high school students at a high school, as long as they are high school level courses (e.g., not remedial).

No. of Participants:

N/A

Growth Trend:

N/A

Limitations to Program Expansion:

N/A

Student Characteristics:

N/A

Staffing:

N/A

Evaluation:

N/A

c. "Running Start" (pilot program for post-secondary enrollment)

Description:

Pilot project which permits 11th and 12th graders to take courses at five of the state's 28 community colleges. This program will be available statewide in 1992-93.

Purpose:
Allows students to earn both high school and college credit for courses taken at a community college while in high school.

Admission Procedures:
N/A

Limitations/Restrictions:
N/A

No. of Participants:
N/A

Growth Trend:
N/A

Limitations to Program Expansion:
N/A

Student Characteristics:
N/A

Staffing:
N/A

Evaluation:
Report to legislature in December, 1991.

d. Home schooling

Description:
Permits students ages 8-18 to be educated at home. This option was authorized by the legislature in 1985.

Purpose:
To provide parents and students more educational choices.

Admission Procedures:
N/A

Limitations/Restrictions:
Parents register their intent to teach their children at home with their local district. Subsequently, there is no further monitoring or supervision by either the school district or the state department of education.

No. of Participants:
7,046 students

Growth Trend:
Stable.

Limitations to Program Expansion:
N/A

Student Characteristics:
N/A

Staffing:
N/A

Evaluation:
N/A

e. Private schools

Description:
Permits students ages 8-18 to attend private schools. This option has always been available to Washington students.

Purpose:
To provide parents and students more educational choices.

Admission Procedures:
Varied, as each school has its own policies.

Limitations/Restrictions:
Private schools are approved annually by the state department of education.

No. of Participants:
63,612

Growth Trend:
Stable.

Limitations to Program Expansion:
N/A

Student Characteristics:

Black:	4.01%
Asian:	6.36%
Indian:	2.49%
Hispanic:	2.65%
White:	84.49%

Staffing:
N/A

Evaluation:
N/A

f. Educational clinics

Description:
Permits public school dropouts ages 13-20 to attend individualized special-purpose programs operating on a clinical, client-centered basis, with specific attention given to improving students' motivation. Educational clinics began in Washington in 1978.

Purpose:

To address the skill, knowledge, and behavioral problems of dropouts to enable them to either return to public school, pass the General Educational Development (GED), go on to higher ducation, or become employed.

Admission Procedures:

Varied. Each clinic sets its own policies.

Limitations/Restrictions:

Students must have either severed public school ties for at least 30 days before being considered for admission, or must have been referred to a clinic by a public school official.

No. of Participants:

1,789 in 13 clinics

Growth Trend:

Stable.

Limitations to Program Expansion:

Clinic funding. 1989-90 state reimbursement per pupil was $1,081. $3.584 million has been allocated for 1991-93. Secondary revenue sources include foundations, grants, businesses, and local support.

Student Characteristics:

Educational clinics serve a high-risk segment of the school population. Students lack the academic skills and motivation to attend school or are prevented from doing so by personal or behavioral problems. Generally, participants have poor academic and attendance records, with skills three to four grade levels below those of their classmates in school; family problems; and frequently have had some involvement with law enforcement or social service agencies. The proportion of participants among the unemployed, the welfare recipients, and the incarcerated far exceeds that of the general population.

Staffing:

N/A

Evaluation:

Achievement and positive activity gains are recorded in the 1989-90 "Superior Performance Index" published by the state department of education.

g. Transition school

A transition school for capable students is operated through the University of Washington and is also an enrollment option for Washington students. Information on this program can be obtained from the University of Washington.

h. Alternative education

Description:

Permits K-12 students diverse learning options in a variety of educational settings. Alternative education began in Washington's public schools in 1930, with much growth and expansion in the 1960s. Today, there are over 150 alternative schools in Washington.

Purpose:

To provide parents and students more educational choices.

Admission Procedures:

Varied. Each school or program sets its own policies.

Limitations/Restrictions:

Varied. Each school or program sets its own policies.

No. of Participants:

N/A

Growth Trend:

Upward. There were 50 alternative schools in 1980; 62 in 1981; 86 in 1983; 107 in 1985; 125 in 1987; and 152 in 1991.

Limitations to Program Expansion:

Funding constraints.

Student Characteristics:

Varied. While many alternative programs serve at-risk students, a growing number of programs are being developed for students of all ages, interests, and abilities.

Staffing:

N/A

Evaluation:

The number of alternative schools is a primary indicator of their success. In addition, an annual conference sponsored by the Washington Alternative Learning Association (WALA) addresses program impact.

STATE OVERVIEW:

West Virginia

Statewide Public School Enrollment:	N/A
Program Option:	Inter-county open enrollment among West Virginia's 55 counties
Grade Levels:	K-12
Date Begun:	1953 school law
Primary Program Revenue Source:	General education revenue which follows the student
Average Annual State Expenditure/ Pupil	N/A
Average Program Cost/Pupil	N/A
Contact Person:	Karen Larry Coordinator, Adolescent Education and Acting Director, Office of General Education, West Virginia Dept. of Education 304/348-7805
Linkage to National Goals:	The open enrollment school law dates from 1953 and, therefore, has no tie-in with the national goals.

Choice Program in West Virginia

1. Inter-county open enrollment

Description:

West Virginia offers an inter-county open enrollment option, whereby students can transfer, on full- or part-time basis, among West Virginia's 55 counties, with approval from both local boards of education, whenever the education and welfare of a student will be enhanced. This school law in West Virginia is not seen as a "choice" program by West Virginians, but rather, as a means to allow students to attend schools closest to their places of residence or to receive specialized instruction unavailable in the home county. Whenever a student is transferred from one school district to another district on a full- or part-time basis, the board of education in which the student is a bonafide resident pays to the board of education of the school district to which the student is transferred a tuition that is agreed upon by both boards. Tuition for each full-time student cannot exceed the difference between the state aid per student received by the county to which the student is transferred and the county cost per student in the county to which the student is transferred. In practice, tuition is seldom involved.

Purpose:

To allow students to attend schools closest to their homes even if those schools are in adjacent districts.

Admissions Procedure:

Written request by parent or guardian.

Limitations/Restrictions:

No authority has been granted by the legislature to a board of education to establish any special requirements for the admission of pupils from one county to another. However, counties do have space and pupil/teacher limitations.

No. of Participants:

N/A

Growth Trend:

N/A

Limitations to Program Expansion:

None.

Student Characteristics:

The law applies to all students grades K-12.

Staffing:

N/A

Evaluation:

None.

II. SELECTED LOCAL PROGRAMS

LOCAL PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

Milwaukee Choice Plan
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Statewide Public School Enrollment:	692,150
District Enrollment:	98,000
Program Option:	Localized, public/private choice voucher program
Grade Levels:	K-12 (80% in grades K-8)
Date Begun:	Fall, 1990
Primary Revenue Source:	$2,442 state reimbursement per pupil
Secondary Revenue Source:	Private school tuition, federal funds (e.g., Chapter 1)
Average Annual State Expenditure/Pupil:	$5,332
Average Annual Program Cost/Pupil:	N/A (state law does not allow for private school data collection)
Contact Persons:	Pat Sweeney, Budget and Policy Analyst 608/266-1771 Gus Knitt, Consultant for School Finance, Federal Impact Aid, and Special Transfer Programs 608/267-9207 (Wisconsin Dept. of Education)
Linkage to National Goals:	The program has been praised by President Bush as fitting in with the America 2000 Strategy, which encourages local school districts to have choice plans offering the widest range of opportunities for families.

Milwaukee Choice Plan

Description:

Wisconsin is the first state in the nation to pass a localized public/private choice voucher program. Legislation passed in 1989 permits parents in the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) to select private schools for their children, to be funded by state reimbursements; the program permits up to 1 percent of the approximately 98,000 students in Milwaukee (980 students) to participate as long as they meet low-income guidelines.

Funding:

For FY 90-91, the participating private schools received taxpayer-financed vouchers of $2,442 for each student accepted. Monies for the program come out of state aid funds (equalized state distribution formula) for MPS, and do not affect general state aid to education (approximately $5,332 per pupil). Cost per pupil in MPS is approximately $5,800-5,900. State reimbursements to the private, nonsectarian schools are supplemented by tuition and federal funds such as Chapter 1. As state law does not allow for private school data collection, average program cost per pupil is not known.

Purpose:

To provide low-income students with opportunities to attend private schools of choice.

Admission Procedures:

Interested parents fill out and submit forms obtained at the private schools of choice.

Limitations/Restrictions:

Each school may accept only enough students to constitute no more than 49 percent of the school's population.

No. of Participants:

Beginning in the fall of 1990, 341 students were accepted for the program out of 635 total applications--80 to 90 percent of these students were in grades K-8. (An estimated 55,000 students meet the income requirements.) Two hundred and sixty students remained in the program by the end of the 1990-91 school year. Part of the attrition is due to one private school dropping out of the program because religion classses were added to the curriculum (private schools in the program must be nonsectarian). The remaining students either left the district or returned to the public schools.

Growth Trend:

Of the 19 private, nonsectarian schools in Milwaukee, seven schools applied for the state reimbursements in the fall of 1990. One school dropped out during the year after losing nonsectarian status. One participating school filed for bankruptcy protection midyear but continued operating under Chapter 11 (it has filed to participate in the program again in the fall). Nine schools have applied for the state reimbursements for fall 1991. Number of students applying for fall 1991 is not yet known.

Limitations to Program Expansion:

The legislation allows for only 1 percent of the approximately 98,000 Milwaukee students to participate or up to 980 students. Only 400 slots were available for voucher students in the seven private schools that chose to participate, necessitating a lottery to allocate the positions.

Student Characteristics:

The program is geared to low-income students, to provide them with the same educational choices as middle- and upper-income students. The criterion for measuring low-income: the student's family income must be less than 1.75 times the poverty level established by the U.S. Bureau of the Census--$13,360 for a family of four in 1990.

Staffing:

The program has helped some private schools stay afloat by providing sufficient enrollment. However, as state law does not allow for private school data collection, staffing fluctuations are not known.

Evaluation:

So far, no objective evaluation exists of the program's progress. Private schools in Wisconsin are not required to meet the 20 minimum standards the state imposes on public school districts; private schools need only meet their own expectations. However, a study has been commissioned to compare the gains made by students participating in the program with students attending the Milwaukee Public Schools. John Witte, University of Wisconsin/Madison, is conducting the study.

Additional Notes:

The Milwaukee Choice Plan, the first public/private voucher program passed by a state legislature, affects only a very small percentage of students (260 out of 98,000 students). In the summer of 1990, the program was challenged in Dane County Circuit Court by the Wisconsin Educators Association Council, the state's largest teachers union, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, among others. The court ruled that the program did not violate the Wisconsin Constitution and that it should go forward. An appeal is pending.

Background Information on the MPS: (This material is from Peterson, R.S. [December 1990-January 1991]. "What's Happening in Milwaukee?" Educational Leadership, v48, n4.)

For years, the MPS have contracted with private schools for services to specific groups of students; for example, with community-based alternative schools for 500 at-risk high school students and with private daycare centers for 400 all-day kindergartners. The MPS offered their own version of a choice plan to the legislature, which was considered briefly as an alternative to the bill that eventually passed; the MPS version would have expanded this relationship to include grades 1-8 at specific, private, community-based schools through contracts with MPS. The district would have set basic educational standards and accountability; the schools would have had to guarantee access to all students.

In 1977, the MPS had entered into a voluntary school desegregation program, settling a case brought by several plaintiffs. The most visible feature of this school desegregation effort had been the initiation of specialty schools or programs. Most of these programs are still in existence today and are designed to attract students on the strength of thematic programs such as gifted and talented, college preparatory, vocational and technical programs, and the performing arts. Of Milwaukee's 144 schools, 24 were set aside as specialty schools, and the remainder were opened for students on the availability of space and racial guidelines set specifically by the agreement.

As with most systems desegregated in the 1970s, Milwaukee closed many schools in the central city and reopened them as specialty schools, thereby displacing the neighorhood minority (primarily black) students. Neighborhood children were then bused to other schools in predominantly white neighborhoods. The community, both blacks and whites, had begun to express significant concern about the school selection process and what they perceived as the unfair and unwieldy nature of the process of assigning students.

In 1989, the Board identified 13 goals for a new student assignment plan. Chief among these items were mandates to:

1. Increase parental and student choice by allowing parents to make multiple school selections at all educational levels.
2. Enable parents to make informed educational decisions.
3. Enhance the quality of education in all desegregating schools of choice.
4. Facilitate the development of a more efficient and cost effective student transportation system.
5. Encourage the replication of successful schools in programs.

To facilitate development of the student assignment plan, the superintendent recommended implementation of controlled choice called the "Long Range Educational Equity Plan for the Milwaukee Public Schools (LEEP). The plan was modeled after the controlled choice program in Cambridge, Massachusetts and focused on the improvement of all schools and the equitable treatment of all students. The main features of the plan were to:

1. Provide a timetable for the improvement of the MPS.

2. Establish special racial percentages and representation for all racial groups.

3. Provide for parent selection of any schools within the two zones created in the plan (all schools belong to everyone).

4. "Grandfather" all students into their present schools and suggest a timetable for student assignment.

5. Suggest specific plans for replication of successful specialty programs in the two zones and/or the creation of new programs to meet student needs.

By June 1990, it became clear that the community did not support LEEP. This lack of support stemmed from many community perceptions, including: (1) loss of access to quality specialty programs; (2) lack of faith that the school district would replicate or create additional specialty programs; (3) decreased rather than increased access to schools of choice; and (4) fears of mandated transfers under the new student assignment plan.

In the face of this opposition, the superintendent and board chose to pursue another strategy to accomplish their goals. A timetable for school improvement was established before adopting a change in student assignment. In the FY '91 budget, the board established a substantial equity fund whereby schools could apply to restructure their schools or to develop new programs. Approximately 70 school applications were accepted under this fund, and these schools received grants to implement the programs during the 1990-91 school year. By insisting on school improvement prior to modification of student assignment, the superintendent and board hope to build a base of support by generating high quality in all Milwaukee schools.

LOCAL PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

Cupertino Union School District
Cupertino, California

Statewide Public School Enrollment: 4,738,570 students in 1001 school districts

District Enrollment: 12,400

Program Options: The open enrollment alternative education program has three components: (1) intra-district and inter-district open enrollment; (2) two alternative schools; (3) home schooling.

Grade Levels: K-8

Date Begun: 1975 (home schooling: 1989)

Primary Program Revenue Source(s): California revenue base of $2,920/pupil, plus other standard sources

Secondary Revenue Source(s): Cupertino Educational Endowment Foundation and various small grants

Average Annual State Expenditure/Pupil:
Overall $4,931

Average Annual Program Cost/Pupil:
$3,600-4,000

Contact Person: Judith A. Fritz
Associate Superintendent of Instruction
(408) 252-3000, extension 611

Linkage to National Goals: Cupertino's strategic plan, currently being revised, was developed in 1986. Thus, the school district considers its plan far ahead of the national goals.

Cupertino Open Enrollment Alternative Education Program

Description:

Permits students to attend school in any of the following: in their attendance area; in another school within the district; in one of two alternative schools within the district; in another school district; or at home. Also permits students from other districts to attend school in Cupertino.

The two alternative schools use different teaching strategies from the attendance area schools: Faria Academics Plus School is a very structured, back to basics, direct teacher instruction school; Christa McAuliffe School is a hands-on, developmental approach, child-centered, parent cooperative school.

Purpose:

To provide for diverse educational approaches and parent choice.

Admission Procedures:

Parents are mailed information on the open enrollment alternative education program every spring during "open enrollment" time. (Information on home schooling is not a part of this packet.) This information is mailed to parents outside of the district on request. Requests for transfers to schools other than the student's attendance area school are made to the school of desired attendance; transfer requests may be made to one school only.

Limitations/Restrictions:

- Placement is based on space available in each of the schools. Requests from parents within the district have priority over out-of-district requests.
- Parents must provide their own transportation.
- If parents request home schooling, an initial conference is held. If all parties agree, a contract between the school district and the parents is set up. Parents then have access to all district resources: staff, materials, counseling, goals, testing, assessment, evaluation, etc. Monthly conferences with a resource teacher are required. Parents may submit receipts for educational expenses up to $1,000 for approval and reimbursement by the district.

No. of Participants:

Approximately 1,700 students (just under 14 percent of district enrollment) participate in program components. Included in this figure are 112 students enrolled in the home schooling program. Three-quarters of the home schooling families live outside the district.

Growth Trend:

The McAuliffe School is projected to grow to two classes per grade level over the next four years. Faria School is projected to grow to three classes per grade level within five years.

Limitations to Program Expansion:

Space is a major consideration in the expansion of both programs; due to the nature of the McAuliffe program, the instructional space needs are greater than for a typical classroom.

Student Characteristics:

Both within the district and the program as a whole, the ethnic distribution is as follows:

Black	2.0%
Hispanic	4.0%
Asian	28.0%
Other	66.0%

Staffing:

The open enrollment alternative education program involves all the schools in the district; no overall assessment on staffing impact has been made. The two alternative schools draw staff whose teaching philosophies are compatible with the goals of those schools. One hundred percent parent participation is a key point at McAuliffe School.

Evaluation:

Cupertino School District is in the top 3 percent in state testing in the following areas:

Grades 3 and 6: reading/math/writing
Grade 8: reading/math/writing/science/social studies

LOCAL PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

San Jose Unified School District
San Jose, California

Statewide Public School Enrollment: 4,738,570 in 1001 school districts

District Enrollment: 29,289

Program Options: Intra-district choices

Grade Levels: K-12

Date Begun: 1986 (court-ordered desegregation)

Primary Program Revenue Source(s): 91/92 Budget
Revenue limit sources: $88.8 million
$31,800,000 state*
$57,000,000 local taxes
Other specially-funded state programs: $44.4 million

* $22.6 million of the $44.4 million from the state comes because of and for court-ordered desegregation program; e.g. they would get $771 per student less if not for this special reimbursement.

Secondary Revenue Source(s): Federal grants: $8.8 million
Local income: $2.6 million

Average Annual State Expenditure/Pupil:
Overall $4,931

Average Annual Program Cost/Pupil:
*$5,060

Contact Persons:

Sharon Borg
Program Manager, Student Assignment
(408) 998-6232

George Vandenburg
Assistant Superintendent, Budget and Fiscal Services
(408) 998-6142

Elaine Leavy
Student Testing Program Associate
(408) 998-6073

Amy Lins
Manager, Food Services/Nutritional Education
(408) 998-6021

Linkage to National Goals:

The superintendent and staff have been very active in meshing district goals and activities with the National Goals.

San Jose Intra-District Choice

Description:

This is the sixth year of San Jose's desegregation plan which is based primarily on parents making choices for the schools they wish their children to attend within the district. Transportation costs are reimbursed through the state. Transportation is provided from home to school, day care, etc., consistent with the district's transportation policy. Six thousand students ride buses.

Purpose:

To offer parents and students a wide variety of program and school choices in an integrated environment.

Admission Procedures:

Prospective kindergarten, as well as all new students, enroll at two Information and Enrollment Centers. Students who are changing levels, e.g., elementary to middle, and middle to high school, also participate in the choice process through their schools. If a student's first choice school is not available, the student is placed on a waiting list for that school.

Limitations/Restrictions:

- Students may not be able to receive their first choice due to overall school capacity, grade level capacity, or ethnic ratio of a shcool.

- Priority is given to (a) students who live in the school's attendance area; and (b) siblings. However, the three elementary districtwide magnet schools do not have attendance areas.

No. of Participants:

One hundred percent of the district's students are now attending desegregated schools.

Growth Trend:

During the first four years of the program, the percentage of students attending desegregrated schools rose from 50 percent to 90 percent. During the fifth and sixth years, the 100 percent figure was reached.

Approximately 85 percent of students on waiting lists are given the opportunity to be reassigned to their first-choice school each year.

Limitations to Program Expansion:

N/A

Student Characteristics:

Male students comprise 51.2 percent; female students comprise 48.7 percent. Free lunch is offered to 7,114 students; reduced price lunch is offered to 790 students. Ethnic ratio:

Indian or American Alaskan:	1.2%
Asian	11.7%
Filipino	1.3%
Black	3.3%
White	40.5%
Hispanic	41.2%
Pacific Islander	0.4%

Staffing:

Some schools have deliberately reduced or increased staff size as the program has developed. Additional staffing has generally been in special areas such as language.

Evaluation:

One hundred percent of the district's students are now attending desegregated schools. Time on waiting lists has dropped. Over 92 percent of parents receive their school of first choice. Parents do "shop" for the school they wish their children to attend, and there is more parent involvement in the schools. "A Study of Student Achievement from 1985-1990, Using Population and Socioeconomic Data" offers a comprehensive look at student achievement scores.

LOCAL PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

Metropolitan Learning Center
Portland, Oregon

Statewide Public School Enrollment: 465,200 students

School Enrollment: 465 out of 38,000 in the school district

Program Option: Magnet school for alternative education

Grade Levels: K-12

Date Begun: 1968

Primary Program Revenue Source(s): Portland Public Schools

Secondary Revenue Source(s): N/A

Average Annual State Expenditure/Pupil:
Overall $4,733

Average Annual Program Cost/Pupil:
$5,000 (elementary) and $5,500 (secondary) for Portland Public Schools overall. Breakdown for MLC not available.

Contact Persons:

Ann Wright
Registrar
(503) 280-5737

Pat Burk
Principal
(503) 280-5737

Maureen Bonfiglio
Volunteer Coordinator
(503) 280-5780

Linkage to National Goals: There has been no particular effort to mesh program goals with the national goals.

Metropolitan Learning Center (MLC) Magnet School for Alternative Education

Description:

MLC provides an ungraded curriculum with heavy emphasis on the humanities. The learning environment is very familial; individual contracts with flexible, self-scheduling time structure are offered. There is much cross-graded activity.

Purpose:

To provide a noncompetitive, self-paced atmosphere where students learn to love knowledge for its own sake when they are encouraged to make personal educational choices.

Admission Procedures:

Parents and students must visit the school, then submit an application packet which includes a student application, parent letter, teacher recommendation, principal/counselor recommendation, recent report card, and test scores for 3rd-12th graders. Following a review of the application, if there are openings, both the parent and student may be interviewed. If accepted, the student will be placed on a waiting list. Students are accepted in September and at semester break in January.

Limitations/Restrictions:

- Parents must provide transportation.
- Acceptance is limited to space available in the grade groupings: K-3, 4-6, 7-8, and 9-12.
- Applicants must meet entrance requirements.

No. of Participants:

K-3:	88
4-6:	92
7-8:	85
9-12:	200
Total:	465

Growth Trend:

(Data forthcoming)

Limitations to Program Expansion:

Space availability.

Student Characteristics:

Male students at MLC comprise 47.5 percent; female students comprise 52.5 percent. Minority enrollment is 10.3 percent (goal is 20 percent).

Staffing:

Certificated staff includes, among others, 19 general education teachers, one special education teacher, one media specialist, and two administrators. The staff to student ratio is consistent with the district average. Staff must be willing to work with all ages, have a child-centered philosophy, and a diversity of experience. This experience should include exposure to more than one subject area through a combination of certification, interests, multiple hobbies, travel, and other skills which could be useful in teaching elective courses.

There is heavy community/parent involvement. During the 1990-91 school year, 8030 volunteer hours were contributed to MLC. Seventy instructional volunteers contributed 2,725 hours. Fifteen tutors contributed 300 hours. One hundred sixty-two resource/enrichment volunteers donated 3,050 hours. 75 PTSA volunteers gave 1,150 hours. Two hundred and fifty hours were given by 25 advisory volunteers. Twenty- eight peer helpers gave 150 hours. Three volunter coordinators provided 180 hours. Six parents contributed 225 hours on a parent-to-parent newsletter.

Evaluation:

Internally, formative information is gathered by follow-up interviews after students leave. Student/staff/parent dialogue is constant and ongoing. At the end of each year, the question, "Is what we're doing truly an alternative in our school district?" is discussed.

Third and eighth graders average in the 80th percentile in mathematics and reading; fourth graders average in the 90th percentile.

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- Developing and disseminating effective educational products and procedures
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